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## D. SCRIBES LIFE OF SOVIETS IN ALBANIA

Contrary to general belief, there are not many Soviet citizens in Albania, but these few occupy high administrative posts and enjoy special privileges so that a stay in Albania is considered a reward for proteges of the Moscow Politburo or the Ministry of Defense. Supposedly, they come as instructors or advisors, but their true function is supervision and control.

A former Albanian officer who escaped from Albania recently said that there are only about 100 Soviet field officers there. They arrive by plane from Bulgaria, dressed in poorly made clothes of cheap cloth, and are whisked away secretly to a hotel where they are outfitted. They are allowed to bring their families and receive living quarters and a car immediately.

The beautiful city of New Tirana is entirely occupied by Soviet families. They enjoy the same ration cards as the diplomatic corps and the top Albanian officials and are supplied by Cooperative A, which, as everyone knows, handles the best foreign and domestic produce. In the meantime, the Albanian people are starving, and infant mortality has reached frightening proportions.

The pay of the Soviets, charged to the Albanian government, greatly exceeds that of Albanians of the same rank. A Soviet colonel, for example, receives 60,000 leks a month (1,200 American dollars); an Albanian colonel, 12,000 leks. The average Albanian state official receives about 3,000 leks per month.

After a few months in Tirana or some other principal city, Soviet officers or officials who arrived emaciated and in rags can be seen promenading in welltailored clothes (there are plenty of good tailors in Tirana) of English cloth, their faces flushed from copious libations and good food, accompanied by elegant women and children whose rosy complexions contrast sharply with the pallor of Albanian children.

Soviet families, installed in the comfortable, often luxurious villas of New Tirana, employ as domestics women who belonged to Albanian aristocracy or the upper bourgeoisie. These unfortunates, whose husbands are usually either

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dead or in prison, and who are not allowed ration cards, feel themselves lucky if they can find employment as governesses, maids, or cooks in a Soviet family. Most of them have been educated abroad and, hence, are able to teach the boys various languages and show the women and girls how to dress and how to act in society. For their part, the Soviets are not stingy and pay better for services than members of the upper Albanian hierarchy.

Soviet officers and officials obtain through these Albanian women jewels, clothing richly embroidered in gold, old weapons, and other valuable items. They also learn where to buy marengos Napoleonic Italian gold coins, the sale of which is prohibited. At Shkoder, an Albanian, Kil Abati, was shot for trying to buy two marengos, but if the police find that a Soviet is the purchaser, the matter is simply dropped.

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